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ABSTRACT

Development, implementation, and evaluation of a career education program in the high schools of Rome, Georgia are described. Evaluation of the career education program in tenth grade social studies and language arts courses was carried out through a subjective student rating and an objective analysis of Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) scores. Analysis of the student evaluations include the following: (1) Students perceived that their teachers discussed careers principally in the language arts and social studies classes, and (2) students perceived an active involvement and support of career education on the part of teachers, counselors, and through school programing. Analysis of CMI data shows evidence in support of a positive effect of the career education program on tenth grade students' career maturity. As a result of the first year's success, the following is planned: Social studies classes will be used exclusively for the program to accomplish greater classroom consistency. Counselors will be involved in classroom activities for all high school grades, integrating the counselor's activities more fully in the curricular program of the schools. These activities will relate curriculum to general career choices, develop an understanding of students' personal characteristics and values, and focus on individual career choices. A career record file will be maintained for each student in grades 7-12 including career goals, career plans, skills needed to learn, and jobs held. (TA)

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# CAREER EDUCATION IN THE HIGH SCHOOL: AN INTEGRATION OF COUNSELOR AND TEACHER FUNCTIONS

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The following article represents the development, assessment, and refinement of a career education program for the high schools of Rome, Georgia, a moderate sized city with a population of 36,000 people. In contrast to the haphazard manner in which many programs in education have been implemented, the career education program was developed systematically in a disciplined fashion. The process of development of the program involved: (1) recognition of the potential contributions of a career education program through the emerging body of theory and research currently available in career education, (2) a systematic needs assessment for career education in the high schools of Rome, Georgia, (3) the development and implementation of the career education program during the 1974-75 school year in the Rome high schools and, (4) the evaluation of the program and recommendati or change in the 197 chool year.

## The

The American high school is currently under a barrage of criticism much of it focusing on the irrelevant curriculum and the ineffective preparation of students. Consequently, students are bored, teachers are frustrated and the general public has become increasingly concerned with the quality of students' educational experiences. Although these criticisms may present a strong indictment

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of secondary education in general, data concerning Rome, Georgia students seemed to bear out the contentions. During the 1974-75 school year 186 of a total school population of 1,498 Rome students dropped out of high school. Of this number, 85% were in the third and fourth quartile in ability, apparently indicating that the school program was not meaningful to them. The most frequent reason given for leaving was "lack of interest".

Data from student surveys indicates unrealistic planning on the part of high school students. In the 1972-73 school year the counselors in the Rome high schools compiled a survey of plans of high school students. A majority of the students indicated that they planned to continue their education after high school, yet less than half the students were enrolled in the appropriate preparatory courses. Future vocational choice of the students also revealed inadequate knowledge of employment opportunities. Indecision involved students in all levels of ability. The study indicated that students who had not made a tentative career choice included 37% in the upper half in ability and 55% in the lower half.

## Needs Assessment

During the 1972-73 school year all junior and senior high schools participated in the Needs Assessment Program for Counselor Evaluation, sponsored by the Department of Guidance Services, Georgia State Department of Education. Questionnaires concerning the counselor's role in the school were distributed to students, teachers, and school administrators. The results indicated that all agreed the counselors should participate more actively in post-high school planning and placement.

As a part of the system-wide staff development proposal, each faculty assessed the student needs in their school. The secondary teachers listed as a major priority the development of a more meaningful curriculum for all students.

Students echoed this need when they indicated a general lack of knowledge of the relationship between high school courses and the requirements for job opportunities. A large majority agreed that more time should be spent by all students in developing a background of meaningful information so as to be able to make more realistic career choices. They also expressed the desire for more concrete assistance in preparing for the next step after high school, especially in the area of job placement.

Although vocational subjects are available in the Rome Schools, it was discerned from the needs assessment data that there existed the necessity to build for each student a backlog of career information. Greater emphasis needed to be placed upon a coordinated approach to career guidance with counselor and teacher involvement integral to the program.

## Method

Through increased counselor involvement in curriculum development, 25 tenth grade social studies and 23 language arts courses were related to the world of work in Rome so that the students could gain in self-awareness and become more realistic in their career planning. It was assumed that as the content of the social studies and language arts became more meaningful, students would become more interested in their school work. It was also assumed that the counselor's knowledge concerning the world of work and the teacher's knowledge of social studies and language arts content would be interrelated so as to provide greater relevancy for students. New courses in the sociology of work and the career internship provided both classroom theory, career exploration, and practical field experiences.

At the end of the year it was anticipated that students could explain how education and work were interrelated, project career choices in terms of

self-understanding, could categorize occupations in a manner realistic and appropriate to their stage of development, and could discuss job opportunities in Rome.

Teacher and counselor preparation included a two week summer workshop involving both the theoretical background and the emperical knowledge necessary for implementing the program. Monthly in-service training during the school year continued the staff development.

The counselors served as facilitators to provide the teachers with the resources and information needed in the classroom. Counselors worked with students individually and in groups analyzing and interpreting the scores on the Career Maturity Inventory, an objective group administered test of career maturity containing the following scales: 1) attitude, 2) self-appraisal, 3) occupational information, 4) goal selection, 5) planning, and 6) problem-solving.

Also included in the program for tenth grade students was the Sophomore Career Week program originally begun in the 1973-74 school year. The purpose of the program was to familiarize students with jobs, job opportunities and educational programs available to them in the Rome area. Representatives from businesses, industries and educational institutions were available for interviews and discussions with interested students.

## Evaluation and Results

The evaluation of the Career Education Program of the Rome high schools was carried out from the following different perspectives: 1) a subjective student rating and 2) an objective analysis of the Career Maturity Inventory scores.

The subjective student evaluation of the Career Education Program was administered to all tenth grade students in Rome's two high schools in May,

1975. The questions utilized and the results of the evaluation are as follows:

1. Have any of your teachers discussed careers, jobs or work in your class?

Total

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raw | % | Raw | % |
| 186 | 79 | 49 | 21 |

The majority of students indicated that the language arts and social studies classes were the major subject areas where careers were discussed. These two classes comprised the course focus for the career education program.

2. Has the school, through various programs, emphasized careers, jobs, and test scores?

Total

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raw | % | Raw | % |
| 201 | 86 | 34 | 14 |

The majority of students indicated that the school emphasized careers through the program, "Sophomore Career Week."

3. Has your counselor been active in discussing careers, jobs, and test scores?

Total

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raw | % | Raw | % |
| 199 | 85 | 36 | 15 |

The data indicated that counselors spent anywhere from "3 minutes" to "countless" hours in discussing careers, jobs and test scores individually and in groups.

The test scores on the Career Maturity Inventory were analyzed using the student t distribution comparing 1) the total Rome high school's pre and post-test scores on the CMI and 2) a local county high school's scores compared with the post-test scores for the Rome high schools. It was hypothesized that the post-test scores for the CMI data would be significantly higher from the pre-test scores due to the impact of the Career Education Program. It was also hypothesized that the CMI post-test scores for the Rome high schools would be significantly higher than the CMI scores for a local county high school due to the impact of the Career Education Program.

The tenth grade high school students who took the CMI were randomly selected by choosing every fifth name from an alphabetical class roster list for the Rome high schools. Seventy-six students were randomly selected from the Rome high schools and seventy-seven tenth grade students at a local county high school were utilized for the comparison group. The pre-test for the Rome high schools was given in September, 1974 and the post-test was given in May, 1975. The comparison group at a local county high school was given the CMI in April, 1975.

The following is a table of results obtained from the Career Maturity Inventory:

+ Test Values for the Career Maturity Inventory

| | Attitude Scale | Self Appraisal | Occupational Information | Goal Selection | Planning | Problem Solving |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rome high school | 2.2628* | 2.5795* | 1.9893* | 1.6852* | .7191 | 1.6578* |
| Rome high schools compared with a local county high school | .8241 | 3.1017** | 2.3953** | 2.8172** | 1.3514 | 2.6031** |

*significant at the .05 level
**significant at the .01 level

An analysis of the t distribution reveals significant changes for the students in the Rome high schools based on the CMI scores on the attitude scale, the self-appraisal scale, the occupational information scale, the goal selection scale, and the problem solving scale. The Rome high school CMI scores compared with a local county high school CMI scores showed the Rome high school's students scored significantly higher on the self-appraisal scale, the occupational information scale, the goal selection scale, and the problem solving scale. A trend toward significance was found on the planning scale.

## Discussion

The analysis of the subjective student evaluations of the Career Education program reveals the following results: 1) students did perceive that their teachers discussed careers (79% agreed)principally in the language arts classes and the social studies classes in the Rome high schools, 2) students did perceive that the schools, through various programs, emphasized careers, jobs and test scores (86% agreed) principally through the "Sophomore Career Week" activities and, 3) students did perceive that their counselor had been active in discussing careers, jobs, and test scores (85% agreed) for varying amounts of time. Students did perceive an active involvement and support of career education on the part of the teachers, counselors and through school programming.

From the analysis of the CMI data, there is strong objective evidence in support of the very positive effect that the Rome high school's Career Education program has had on tenth grade student's career maturity. The data from the total tenth grade sample revealed significant changes from the pre- to the post-test on the CMI on five out of the six scales. When compared

to a local county high school's tenth grade students, the Rome high school students, after the Career Education Program, demonstrated significant higher career maturity on four of the six CMI scales. Thus the hypotheses were partially supported.

The Career Education program will be continued, expanded and changed for the 1975-76 school year, due to the success and experiences gained during the 1974-75 year. The social studies classes will be utilized exclusively for the program to accomplish greater classroom consistency. Counselors will be involved in classroom activities for all high school grades integrating the counselor's activities more fully in the curricular program of the schools. The classroom activities of the counselors will relate the high school curriculum to general career choices, will develop an understanding of student's personal characteristics and values, and will focus on individual career choices. Career aids will be hired as resource persons working with students, counselors and teachers. A Career Record File will be maintained for each student in grades seven through twelve including personal career goals, career plans, skills needed to learn, and jobs held. The Sophomore Career Week program and the counselor involvement with individual and group counseling related to careers will continue similar to the 1974-75 program.

The Career Education program in Rome, Georgia while enjoying a successful history, continues to evolve and change. The process is designed to achieve a more meaningful and personally relevant educational experience for high school students.



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